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Jordan DeAngelo, Home Care
Winsted
SEIU District 1199 New England
Before the Labor Committee

In Support of SB 1178: AN ACT EXPANDING CONNECTICUT PAID SICK DAYS

Good afternoon Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez, and members of the committee. My name is Jordan DeAngelo. I am a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) living and working in Winsted, CT, and I care for my mother. I am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 1178.

Caring for others has always been a part of my life. As a teenager I cared for my grandmother, and so when it became obvious that my mother would benefit from a personal care attendant I stepped up. I enjoy caring for my mom. It makes me happy to know that I am able to help her, allowing her to continue living in her home and doing so comfortably. That said, the fact that I am caring for my mother doesn't make it any easier. As a PCA, I am a professional caregiver and deserve to be able to care for myself without it being a large set back. It saddens me deeply that we work so hard to provide a dignified life for our consumers, yet we are treated with utter disregard by the society we live in.

When I was 23, I suffered a heart attack and was taken to the hospital in an ambulance. The ambulance ride was \$1,000 and I am still paying it off to this day. Additionally, the doctor at the hospital urged me to see a cardiologist, but I didn't because I could not afford the cost and the work time I would have lost. Even routine, preventative measures are out of the question for me. It has been so long since I've been to the dentist that I don't even remember my last cleaning.

In addition to not having health insurance, we also don't have paid sick days. We were able to win paid time off in our last contract, but almost a year later, we are accruing time, but still do not have access to use it. What is a win if the state still hasn't done the work to actually give us what we've won? The state has failed to put a system in place where PCAs can take time off and be paid for it.

High turnover among PCAs due to the lack of benefits also means disruption of care for the clients. They are left to find new PCA's, train them, and build trust and rapport. This is especially difficult for clients who have dementia or similar conditions since they need consistency. PCA's are like family to consumers, or in cases like mine, we literally are family. Both PCAs and the consumers we care for deserve respect. We have been promised so much by the state and have been let down time and time again. Please support SB 1178 so that we are included in paid sick time laws so we don't have to forgo pay when we are sick and so we can protect our chance to care for ourselves when we are sick. We deserve to live healthy and dignified lives too. Thank you for your time.